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Donovan Is at Work on It

Release Hopes Rise for 20 Americans

By George W. Cornell
Associated Press

There are 20 Americans languishing in Cuban prisons, condemned there for years ahead. But now their release is expected shortly.

At least 16 of them are said to be held "incommunicado." Some are reported weak, nervous, deeply despondent. Two are women.

The Swiss Ambassador in Havana, Emil Stadelhoffer, who recently visited some of them in the Isle of Pines prison compound, said of their mental outlook:

"An American without hope is impossible."

Prospects that they may be freed within a few weeks were seen by James B. Donovan, the New York lawyer who arranged the ransom of the Cubans captured in the Bay of Pigs invasion attempt.

Donovan said no goods would be exchanged in the case of the Americans. "It is an entirely different matter," he said, en route to Cuba for negotiations.

Most of the 20 whose fate is

at stake were charged with counter-revolutionary activity against the Fidel Castro regime, and sentenced to long terms, 10 to 30 years.

They are of varied temperaments and backgrounds—war veterans, a fireman, a youth who never "liked fighting," a photographer, a boyhood friend of Castro, a flying "soldier of fortune."

Reports of cryptic and audacious missions surrounded some of their arrests.

Parents, in some instances, were mystified by the affairs.

"He had no business in anything like that," said the mother of one of them, Thomas L. Baker, 30, a Dothan, Ala., Army veteran and truck driver.

He and five others, on a yacht in Havana Jan. 7, 1961, were of trying to smuggle anti-Castro into the country, and later rearrested. Cuban exiles say the order imprisoning him came directly from Castro's brother, Raul. One allegation was that he parachuted into Cuba.

Reason for the imprisonment of three other Americans has not been learned. They are Dario Probas and Alberto German Sanchez, both Puerto Ricans, and Ramon Williams, 42, married to a Cu-

kidnaping, eavesdropping on a Red Chinese news agency.

The facts remain uncertain, but two already released American prisoners have told tales of risky, underground ventures.

Rundquist's Story

One of them, Howard Rundquist, 38, a Milwaukee salesman and pilot, June after being out of Cuba.

"It was a high-altitude flight," he said, "trying to fly a C-47 out of Cuba. I was in the cockpit with a pilot named R. Beck, 26, of Nor-

Mass.; Leonard Lewis, 23, of Chicago, Alfred J. Green of Clover-

land, and Frank J. 30, of Elmwood, N. C.; and Justice Dan-Red. They are Dario Probas and Alberto German Sanchez, both Puerto Ricans, and Ramon Williams, 42, married to a Cu-

captured at the St. Johns Hotel in Havana. His wife lives in seclusion in Miami with their children.

Beckles Baker, the five seized on the boat in Havana Harbor are James D. Deane, 34, of Cedar Falls, N. C.; George R. Beck, 26, of Nor-

Americans Held in Cuba

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